

FIRE UPDATE

BUSHFIRE CRC NEWSLETTER JULY 2011

VOLUNTEERS - A FINAL REPORT

Two final reports from the Bushfire CRC's seven-year *Enhancing Volunteerism* project are ready to read on our website.

Led by La Trobe University psychology professor Jim McLennan with researcher Adrian Birch, the *Volunteerism* project provided fire services across Australia and New Zealand with information to help strategic planning and policy development concerning volunteer numbers, and suggested new ways of recruiting and supporting volunteer workforces.

One of the reports summarises the findings

of what was Australasia's largest project investigating the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. The second is a much shorter *Synopsis*.

The project found volunteer-based fire agencies were suffering from declining volunteer numbers, had problems getting volunteers to turn out in business hours and faced static, ageing populations in small rural communities. It looked at ways to tackle the problems.

To view the reports, go to www.bushfirecrc.com/projects/d3/enhancing-volunteerism

NORTHERN FIRE MANAGERS MEET



The North Australian Fire Management Group met at the Kimberley Grand Hotel in Kununurra from 15-16 June. It was hosted by Western Australia's Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA), the WA Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the Bushfire CRC.

It was also attended by representatives from Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management, NT Fire and Rescue Service, Bushfires NT, Charles Darwin University, University of Western Australia, Bureau of Meteorology,

WA Landgate, Australian Wildlife Conservancy and the Bushfire CRC.

The meeting also considered the northern Seasonal Outlook for the coming fire season. This will be shortly published as a Bushfire CRC Fire Note.

Presentations from this meeting are now online.

FIRE DANGER RATING IN CANADA

A seminar on *Fire danger rating in Canada: a new generation of the Canadian Fire Danger Rating System* was presented in Canberra by Dr Mike Wotton, Canadian Forest Service, in June.

The Canadian Forest Service is currently in the process of developing the next generation of the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System. New models within the system will build on the CFS's field-based empirical approach to modelling, but provide greater flexibility to adapt the system to a broader range of forest and fire climate conditions through the

introduction of some more process-based and forest stand-specific models.

This talk described the major changes envisioned from the current generation of the system and attempted to highlight some changes that may be of interest to Australian fire management and research personnel.

Dr Wotton presented this seminar at CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences – Bushfire Dynamics and Applications, Canberra. To listen to the presentation, go to http://www.bushfirecrc.com/research/events_2011

CEO'S BLOG

GARY MORGAN



PRESCRIBED BURNING - A FRESH APPROACH

One of the key recommendations out of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission was to significantly increase the levels of prescribed burning. As we well know, prescribed burning is inherently risky and is likely to have both positive and negative effects.

As part of the Bushfire CRC's mission to conduct research in the social, economic and environmental impacts of bushfires, we have recently announced a substantial new research project that will integrate research information on fires, ecology, human behaviour, values and economics. This is the first time that such a process encompassing different disciplines has been conducted on this land management issue.

The Integrated Assessment of Prescribed Burning project will build upon the outputs of the original Bushfire CRC research program and supplement the current Extension Program.

This project will be conducted over 12 months commencing July 2011 and will be led by Professor David Pannell of the University of Western Australia. It will have implications not just for Victoria but for all areas where fire and land managers are balancing competing demands to manage the threat of bushfires on their communities.

Importantly, this innovative research approach is based on INFFER (Investment Framework for Environmental Resources). INFFER won the Eureka Prize for Interdisciplinary Research in 2009. Full details of this exciting new project will be added to the Bushfire CRC website soon.

DISASTER RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES IN PERTH

The University of Western Australia's School of Psychology is staging a Disaster Research Seminar series in four parts during August and September. The series explores individual and social factors and processes that influence preventing, preparing and responding to natural disasters with a focus on bushfires and earthquakes.

Confirmed speakers are Adjunct Professor Jim McLennan, of La Trobe University, Victoria, 5 August, on what people decide to do during the period between awareness of threat and impact of the hazard; Professor Kevin Ronan, CQ University, Queensland, 26 August, on the role of youth, families and schools in community disaster preparedness and prevention; Professor Douglas Paton, University of Tasmania,



2 September, on adapting to living with bushfire and earthquake hazards; and Associate Professor David Johnston, Massey University, New Zealand, 30 September, on lessons from the recent Christchurch earthquakes.

The seminars are in partnership with the Bushfire CRC and the WA Fire and Emergency Services Authority. For details, go to www.psychology.uwa.edu.au/research/bushfire

RESEARCH BLOG

RICHARD THORNTON



I was pleased to chair the North Australian Fire Management Group

(NAFM) meeting in Kununurra from 15-16 June. It was jointly hosted by WA FESA the WA DEC and the Bushfire CRC.

The Bushfire CRC chairs the NAFM Group meetings each year. This is a meeting of senior fire and land managers from across the tropical north of Australia. It includes representatives from WA, DEC and FESA; NT, FRS and Bushfires NT; and Queensland, QFRS and QPWS, as well as invited guests. This was originally an initiative of the Tropical Savannas CRC in 1999, but following their closure the Bushfire CRC has taken over as Chair.

This forum is an important part of ensuring multi-jurisdictional co-operation across the vast areas in the tropical north of Australia, which is one of the most fire-prone regions on earth with over 37,000,000 hectares being burnt annually.

The meeting took place over two days, the first hearing discussions relating to the past fire season, which was quite subdued. The predictions for the upcoming season, which will form the basis of the Northern Seasonal Outlook, will be published by the Bushfire CRC soon. The meeting also discussed various carbon abatement projects.

The second day was a field day examining fire management challenges around the Eastern Kimberley region. The presentations from the forum are available on the Bushfire CRC website at <http://www.bushfirecrc.com/research/event/2011-nafm>

The next meeting is scheduled for June 2012 in Townsville.

RESEARCH UTILISATION BLOG

NOREEN KRUSEL



During the consultation we undertook when developing our new Research Utilisation Strategy, we

identified that engagement and active involvement was an area that was critical to success.

With this in mind the Bushfire CRC is taking up the opportunity to promote engagement and face to face interaction with our researchers at the upcoming AFAC/Bushfire CRC annual conference in Sydney. In addition to a strong science

focus at the conference, there will be the opportunity to meet many of the researchers in the Research Wrap part of the Knowledge Lounge at the Bushfire CRC booth in the Trade Expo area.

The Knowledge Lounge is an area of informal seating ('a lounge') where people can engage in discussion - in other words, an interactive, two-way dialogue. This can be an effective way to get to know people, to ask questions, to challenge, to listen and in turn progress your thinking about an area of research and what it might mean to you.

The daily Research Wrap program will be advertised with the conference program ... keep your eyes open for it and take the opportunity to engage.

STUDENT BLOG LYNDSEY WRIGHT



More than 20 new researchers have begun their PhD studies with the Bushfire CRC over the past year. The

potential impact of these new researchers was evident at the annual conference in Darwin last year and in presentations at two Research Advisory Forums. At the annual conference in Sydney in late August several more will be giving presentations on the progress of their

research. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm students bring to their work and wonderful to learn from them.

This week a new national advertising campaign began to attract more bright minds to our research program with a final call for those interested in our scholarships to put forward an application. Scholarships are available in all areas with some specific project advertising to fill particular gaps.

If you know of any suitable applicants, please encourage them to at least send me an expression of interest so we can begin

a conversation with them. Scholarships are available to students in all disciplines enrolled or intending to enrol in PhD studies at an Australian or New Zealand university. Obviously we are looking for the best possible students with a passion and interest to work with the industry.

Applications must be received by 31 August 2011 and students must be ready to begin their studies by February 2012.

More information and application can be found at www.bushfirecrc.com/education/research-students